

The first Rules

R U L E S

TO BE OBSERVED BY A

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

Held at No. 16, LONG LANE, SMITHFIELD,

At Two o'Clock every SUNDAY Afternoon,

For the RELIEF of the SICK and DISTRESSED of every Denomination,
As far as the Lord may enable us to be helpful to our poor distressed
Fellow-Creatures.

We propose spending for that purpose, one Hour every Week; and to begin the Meeting with Singing and Prayer, and to conclude with the same.---So help us God.

Blessed is he that considereth the Poor; the Lord will deliver him in the Time of Trouble. Psalm xli. 1.

I. THAT this Society will admit as many Members, both Men and Women, as are willing to enter, if they are such as evidence a Desire to save their Souls: every Member to pay ~~admittance~~ not less than Twopence, and One Penny for the Rules; and not less than One Penny per Week afterwards.

II. That Six Stewards shall be appointed to serve as a Committee for Three Months, which are to be chosen the last Sunday in January, April, July, and October; Two of whom shall keep the Keys of the Box, which is never to be opened but in the Presence of the Society. A President is to be chosen once a Quarter, by Election, who is to preside over the Affairs of the Society.

III. If the President or any of the Stewards, having the Key, absent himself at the Hour appointed for meeting, Sickness excepted, he shall forfeit Threepence to the Box, unless he send the Key, and a reasonable Excuse, by a Member; any Steward, not having a Key, absenting himself, shall forfeit Twopence.

IV. That One of the Members shall be appointed to act as Clerk for One Year; he may be changed any Time the Society please. He shall keep an Account of the Sum each Member has paid, the Number of

shall read the State of the Accounts before the Society, and inform them what Money has been received, what paid out, and the Balance or Stock in the Box.

V. ^{The name of any} Any Person that makes a Present to the Box, be it ever so small, ~~their Name~~, and the Sum given, shall be inserted in the Books.

VI. That no Member shall be free to present an Object of Distress to be relieved until he has been Three Months a Subscriber, except those that joined before the First of February 1786, at which Time the Box was opened, and all the Members were then free.

VII. That the Money shall be given to those only who are Sick or in Distress, and not in Hospitals or Workhouses; and no Member of this Society shall be relieved out of the box but those who have kept good their Payment for One Year, and then the distressed Member shall have the Preference.

VIII. That the Member petitioning shall deliver to the Stewards, before a Quarter past Two o'Clock, the Name, place of Abode, and Circumstances of the Object they present in Writing, that the Stewards appointed may be qualified to visit. No Member to have more than One Object on the Benefit at One Time, except those that subscribe more than a Penny per Week; these may present Objects according to their Subscription.

IX. That no Steward, unless by Choice, shall visit above Two Miles from Smithfield, and, if convenient, to have One of the Members with him. No Woman is obliged to act as Steward; but they shall visit in Cases where the Sex require. The Visitor must see the Object before the middle of the Week.

X. That the Stewards and Visitors shall attend at the Opening of the Meeting, to lay before the Society the Condition of the Objects they have visited, that they may judge who are proper Objects to be relieved the ensuing Week.

XI. That any Subscriber who lives at a Distance, Hour of Public Worship, &c. hindering, shall be excused attending; only once each Quarter it is absolutely necessary all the Members should be present. Any Member neglecting to clear the Books once in Three Months, shall forfeit One Penny to the Box: No Member shall obtain relief for the Object he presents before he clears the Books.

XII. That if any Member, when met in this Society, disputes about Doctrines, such Member or Members shall forfeit Threepence to the Box.

N. B. By these Means any Member may have in their Power to help their Neighbours, without hurting themselves or their Friends.